

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medical device comprising:  
5           a flexible shaft comprising a pulling member movable therein;  
          an actuating mechanism operatively associated with a proximal end of the  
          flexible shaft;  
          an end effector associated with the distal end of the flexible shaft, wherein the  
10          end effector is operatively associated with a distal end of the pulling member;  
          and  
          wherein the actuator mechanism has a first configuration in which the actuator  
          mechanism is decoupled from the pulling member, and a second configuraton  
          wherein the actuator mechanism becomes operatively coupled to the pulling  
15          member to operate the end effector.
2. The device of Claim 1 wherein the actuator mechanism comprises an actuator  
movable from a first position wherein the actuator mechanism is decoupled from the  
pulling member to a second member wherein the actuator mechanism becomes  
20          operatively coupled to the pulling member.
3. The device of Claim 2 wherein the actuator is movable from the second position  
to a third position wherein the end effector is operated.
- 25   4. The device of Claim 1 wherein the actuating mechanism comprises a resilient  
member for operatively coupling the actuation member to the pulling member.
5. The device of Claim 4 wherein the resilient member comprises a spring.
- 30   6. The device of Claim 5 wherein the resilient member comprises a torsion spring.

7. The device of Claim 3 wherein the actuator is movable from the first position to the second position by squeezing with a single hand.
8. The device of Claim 1 wherein a proximal end of the pulling member is joined to a relatively larger diameter member, and wherein the actuator mechanism engages the relatively larger diameter member to provide coupling of the actuator mechanism to the pulling member.
9. The device of Claim 8 wherein the actuator mechanism engages the relatively larger diameter member by gripping engagement.
10. The device of Claim 8 wherein the gripping engagement is provided by a resilient member.
11. The device of Claim 10 wherein the resilient member comprises a torsion spring.
12. The device of Claim 1 wherein the end effector is selected from the group consisting of a biopsy forceps, grasping forceps, surgical scissors, extractors, and snares.